

[The Blessed Candle]

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Page 1. THE BLESSED CANDLE

(Battle of Galveston)

Although she is 81 yrs. old, Mrs. Thresia B. Callahan, of 2409 Ave. [?]. Galveston, can still vividly recount things about the Civil War that she saw when she was a child.

In times of stress or fear, it is an old custom among Catholics to burn candles that have been blessed by [?] priests on [?] Day (February 2). Candles used for Confirmation, also have a special blessing.

"I remember when I was a child during the Battle of Galveston, how my mother used my Confirmation candle," Mrs. Callahan said. "It was the first day of January, New Year's Day, and not a very bright holiday season. My father was a soldier in Company C. 4th Regiment, and was away from home, at war. It was hard to get toys and things for children, so to keep us from feeling neglected, my mother made a lot of small cakes and

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some candy. I was the oldest girl and she gave her engagement ring to me. It was the only present I received that year.

“Our home was on Ave. K, where the old Negro Woman's Home now stands. In the front room upstairs was a big round table. On this, mother put a big plate full of 2 cookies and said it would belong to the first one to get up the next morning.

“About 2 o'clock in the morning someone called my mother. It was cold and dark, but I got up with her to see what was wanted. It was our next door neighbor, Mr. Jacob [?]. He said, 'My wife's making coffee for our soldiers. You know they're coming to take Galveston away from the yankees. What are you and the children going to do?’”

“My mother didn't know what to do, so she took the blessed candle that had been saved from my Confirmation, lit it, put it on a plate and sat it in the window.

“‘If the soldiers see a light in the house, they won't enter it', she told us when we wanted to know what it was for. Sure enough, everything came out all right for us. We had much to be thankful for.

“After mother placed the candle in the window, we went outdoors and sat on the steps and waited for my cousin, who lived with us, to hitch up the horse. While we were waiting there, a cannon ball went whistling over our heads and fell into the Bayou on [?] St. We all called to my cousin, 'Come quick! Never mind the horse!', and we left the horse standing there and started walking.

“It was so dark and cold, and every once in a while a cannon ball would fall somewhere near us. Mother taught me a prayer to say so papa wouldn't get killed, but every time a cannon ball came I was so scared I forgot the prayer. 3 “When we got to the Tucker place on [?] or Ave. [?]. (I'm not sure of the exact location now), we children stopped to admire a large Christmas tree they had in the basement. It was the first Christmas tree we'd seen that year. But another cannon ball fell somewhere near us and mother made us hurry on.

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We went as far as the Davenport's place, where the Catholic Orphans' Home now stands, and stayed there till morning. The Davenport family were out of town, but Mrs. [?] who was taking care of the place, was glad to have us with her.

"The next morning mother left us there and went home. She found the candle still lighted, but it hadn't burned down a bit. Nothing was harmed. She went out and stood on the gallery looking down the street to see if she could see anyone we knew, when she saw papa coming. He saw her and began to run.

"How are the children? Where are they?' he called to her from away down the road. She told him we were all right. He had to go right back to the army then.

"On our way home the next morning, we met two or three neighbors and all of us walked together. We saw some yankees and us children hollered at them, you know how children do. But they didn't pay me any attention and we soon got tired of it.

"When we got home, everything of ours was just as we had left it, but the yankees had stole all the neighbors' chickens and pigs. 4 "Later on, papa came home again and told us about the battle. They had a barge at Houston, filled with cotton bales. They put cannon between the bales of cotton and when the yankees saw the barge coming, they thought it was merely another barge of cotton.

"General [?] was in charge. Did you ever hear of his staff? He had a staff of twelve ladies, all dressed in long, black, tight-fitting dresses. They all wore hats with long black plumes on them. We used to call them the General's staff. I don't know what their duties were, but they certainly made a pretty picture mounted on their black horses." Bibliography: Mrs. Thresia B. Callahan, 2403 Ave. L,

Galveston, Tex., Oct. 23, 1936.

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BJ